

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants amended the specification to correct grammatical errors. No new matter is added. Withdrawn claims 17-19 are cancelled, without prejudice. Claims 11-13 are amended to further clarify features of the present invention. However, these claims are believed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons provided below with respect to the rejection of independent claim 1.

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Imamura (U.S. Patent No. 6,359,752). Applicants traverse the rejection because the cited reference fails to disclose (or suggest), among other things, a head slider or head assembly that includes a slit defined in a trailing end surface of the slider body that extends from the trailing end of the slider body toward a leading end of the slider body.

In the Office Action, the Examiner identifies a slit in FIG. 3 of Imamura as corresponding to the slits 35 of the present invention. However, the slit identified by the Examiner is not at the trailing end surface of the slider body, as shown in the attached marked-up copy of FIG. 3 of Imamura.

In contrast, the present invention has a slit 35 defined in the trailing end surface of the slider body that extends from the trailing end of the slider body toward a leading end of the slider body. This can be seen in the attached marked-up copy of FIG. 4 of the present application, which shows the trailing end surface of the slider body in cross section. The slits 35 are also shown extending from the trailing end surface toward the leading edge. Since

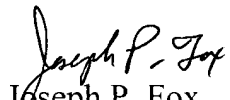
Imamura fails to disclose or suggest this feature, withdrawal of the §102 rejection of independent claims 1 and 16, and also dependent claims 2-15 is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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